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Abstract

The Elementary School Guidance Cooperative was designed to aid isolated school districts exhibiting financial and resource deficiencies in the area of elementary guidance. There were 3 major purposes of the program. The first was to provide an opportunity for children to develop to their fullest potential through early identification and the effective handling of their adjustment problems. The second was to sensitize teachers to the needs of individual students by extending and enriching the teacher's understanding in such areas: individual differences, diagnostic cues, tests and measurements, learning theories, child behavior and development, and classroom guidance techniques. The third purpose was to aid parents in better understanding their children so that they might understand and accept them in terms of their levels of maturity, and in terms of their abilities, interests, and potentialities. During the 1968 school year the program served 7 school districts, 84 teachers, and 2,200 children in the State of Washington. The program was funded under the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Title III. (DK)

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Elementary School Guidance Cooperative For Small School Districts

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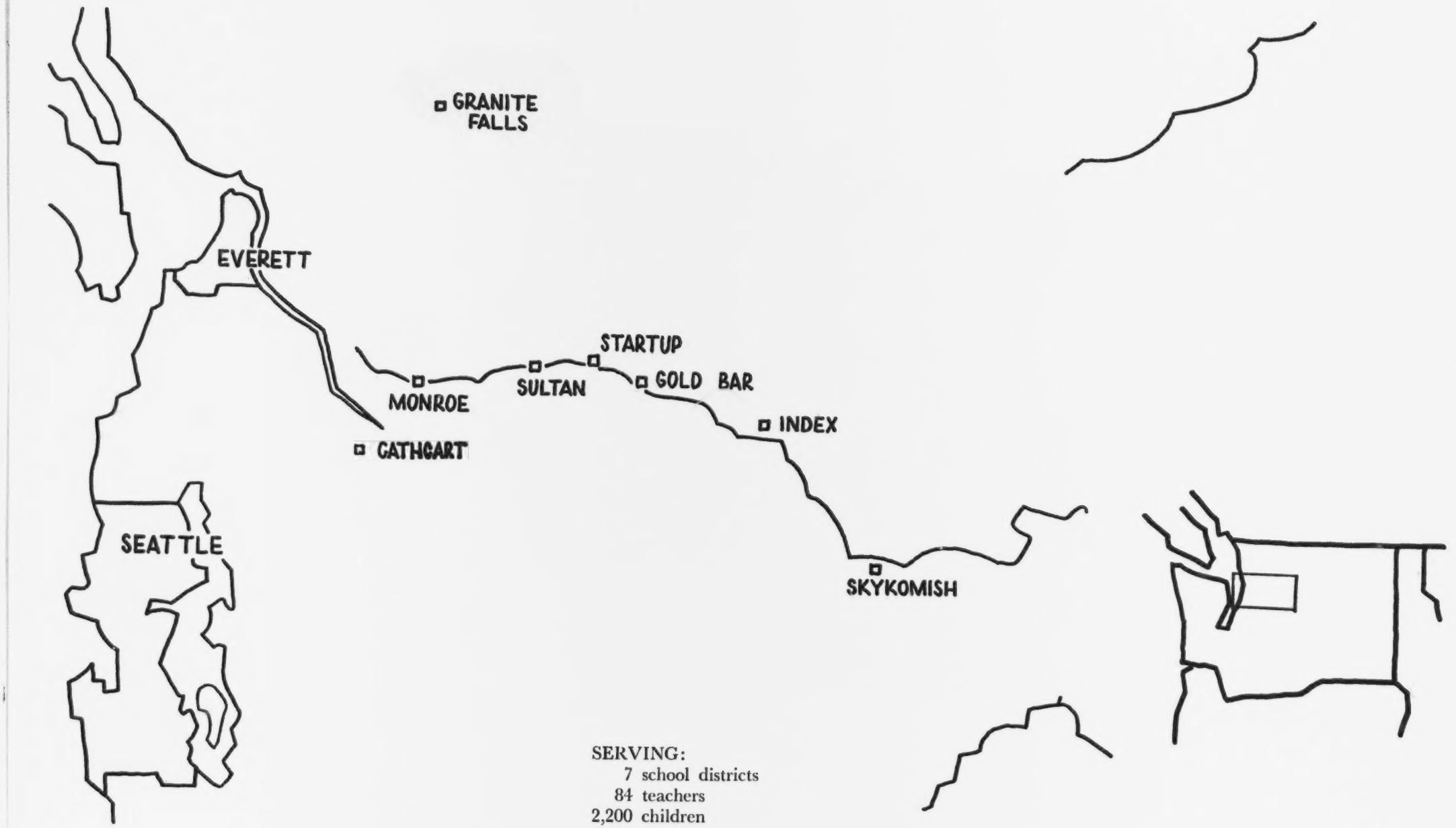
1967-68

RC 008271

[1968]



SERVING:
7 school districts
84 teachers
2,200 children

HISTORY

This elementary school guidance cooperative is funded through the U.S. Office of Education under provisions of Public Law 89-10, Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It fulfills a priority need, one often neglected in the small school district, through means of a cooperative. This program has been designed to serve as a model for areas which manifest similar needs.

Some years ago school personnel in this area expressed a very real concern in regard to the lack of guidance services available to their students. They recognized the need but were financially unable to provide adequate programs in the area of special services. Historically their major previous efforts had been devoted to upgrading instructional programs. This geographical area is characterized by population growth and a limited tax base from which to draw school funds.

Discussion of this problem was the topic of many educational meetings which culminated in the idea of the cooperative. Plans were formulated with the assistance of many local, county and state educational leaders in addition to advise from staff members of Eastern Washington State College.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The major purposes of the Elementary School Guidance Cooperative are as follows:

- Provide an opportunity for children to develop to their fullest potential through early identification and the effective handling of their adjustment problems.

- Sensitize teachers to the needs of individual students by extending and enriching the teacher's understanding in such areas as: individual differences, diagnostic cues, tests and measurements, learning theories, child behavior and development, and classroom guidance techniques.

- Aid parents in better understanding their children so that they might understand and accept them in terms of their levels of maturity, and in terms of their abilities, interests and potentialities.

Working With Children

Direct services to children are provided either through individual counseling or through group guidance. One focus of this project has been to provide a new and comprehensive guidance program by emphasizing the early recognition of the intellectual, emotional, social and physical strengths and weaknesses; encouraging talents which might be discovered; preventing conditions which interefere with learning; and using available resources to meet the needs of children early in their formal education.

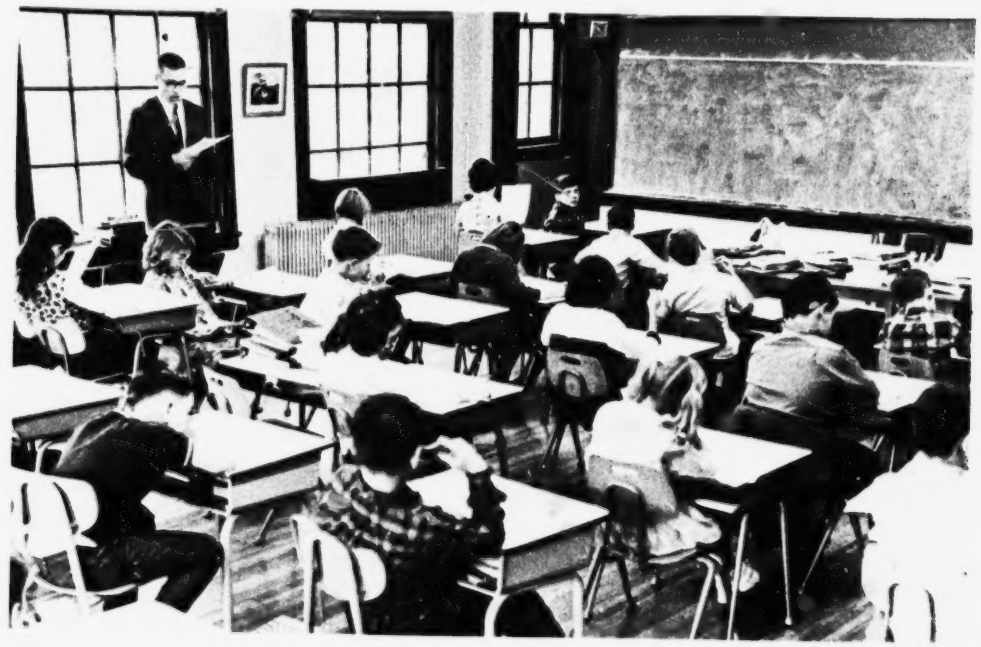
Through an individual counseling process the child eventually understands himself better and makes plans for his future. Results of the one-to-one session can be discussed with the classroom teacher so that she might aid in planning for the child's future program. Findings also provide a more adequate background for the teacher so that she might better handle similar problems in the classroom setting. There are times when the needs of the child cannot be met through the efforts of the counselor and the teacher. It then becomes necessary to involve the school psychologist and/or community agencies with the child's problem. This becomes an endeavor to focus all available facilities on the task of understanding an individual student; to understand him in terms of his self-concept, his environment, and his interpersonal relations, including relationships with his parents.

Group guidance is an effective and necessary part of the program. Groups are formed for a number of purposes which might range from study skills through problems of social and emotional adjustment.

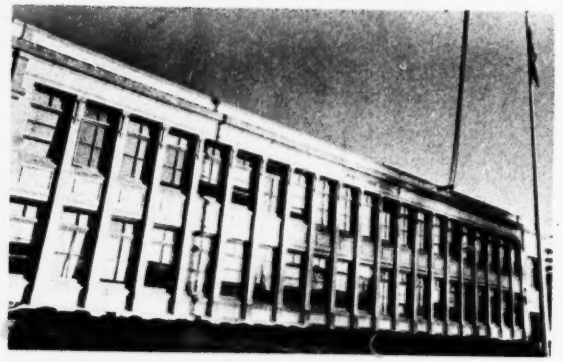
Contact through the use of groups maximizes the number of students who may benefit from the services of the guidance person and can be used as a vehicle for role playing, psychodrama and other techniques calculated to allow the group and individual to work through a problem to a successful solution.

Group guidance aids the normal child. A program which conducts all its guidance activities on an individual basis usually gives too little attention to the normal child. Although this so-called normal child is usually able to solve most of his own problems through his own efforts, he may not be getting the attention he deserves. Through group guidance he can be given the information and direction he wants and needs.

Pictures on these two pages depict counselors with children on a one-to-one basis and in group processes.



FRANK WAGNER



CENTRAL

MONROE'S TWO

GRANITE FALLS

CATHCART

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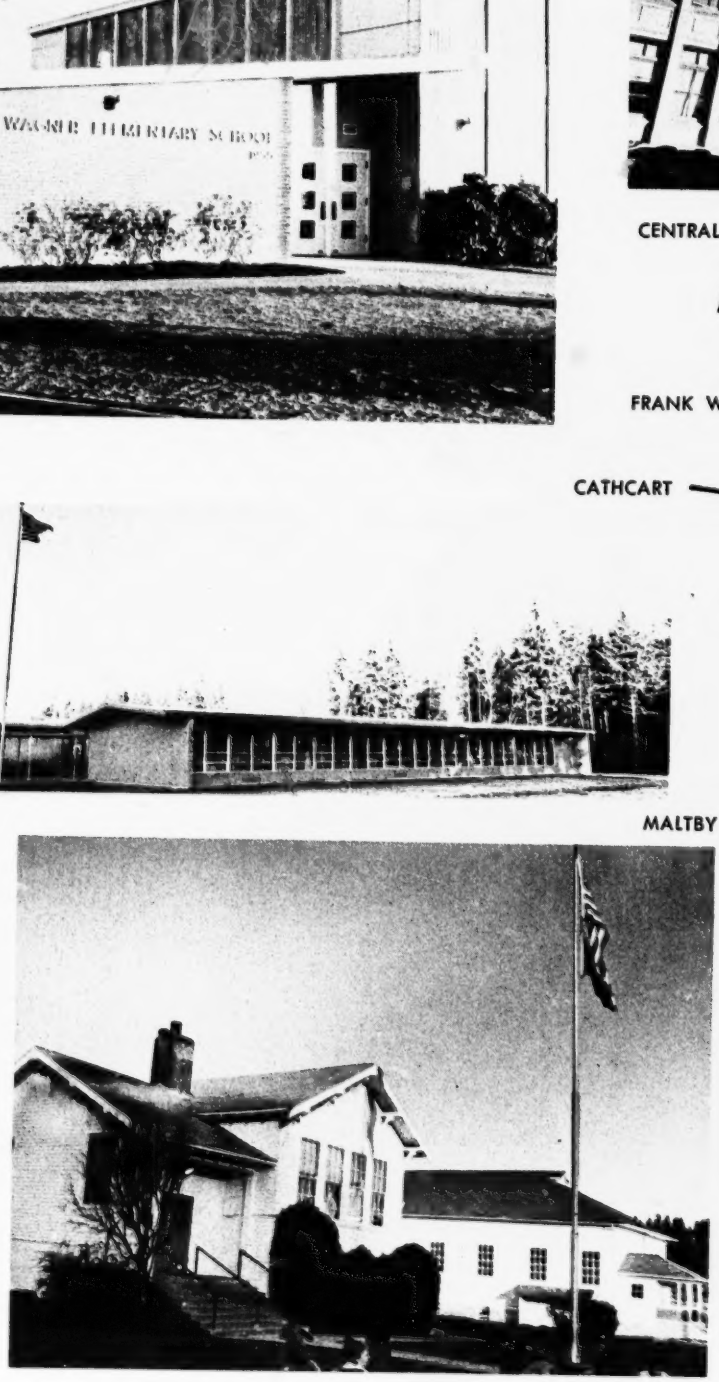

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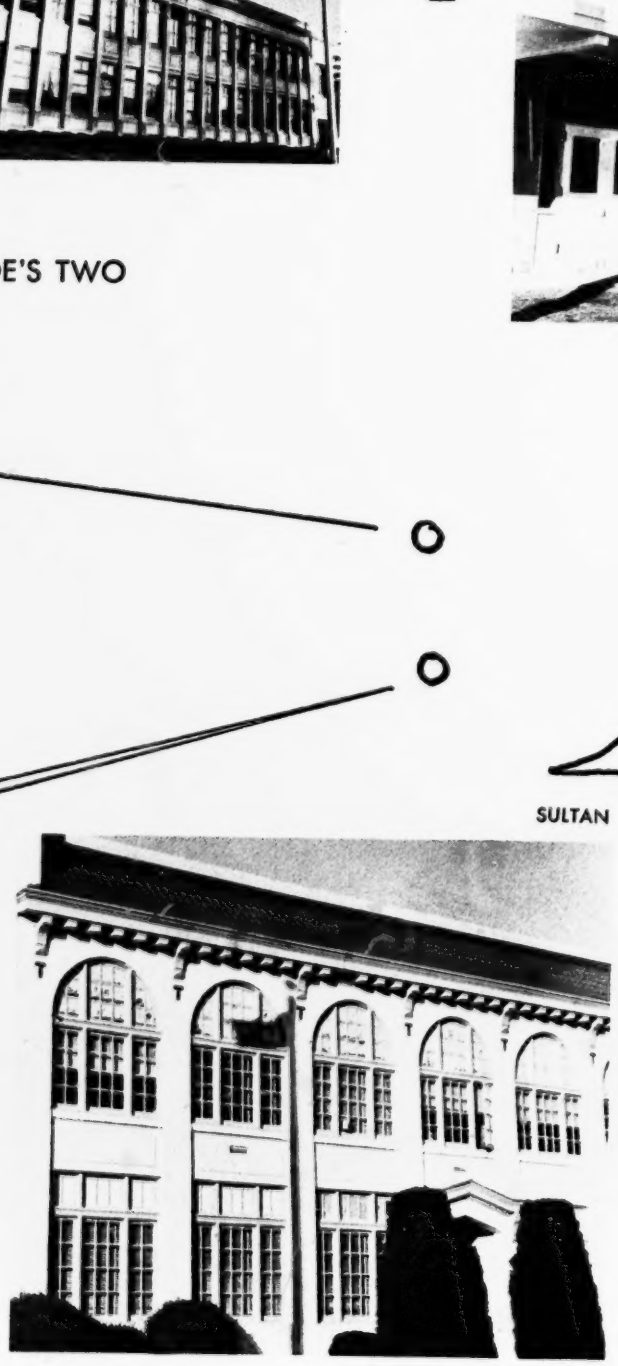
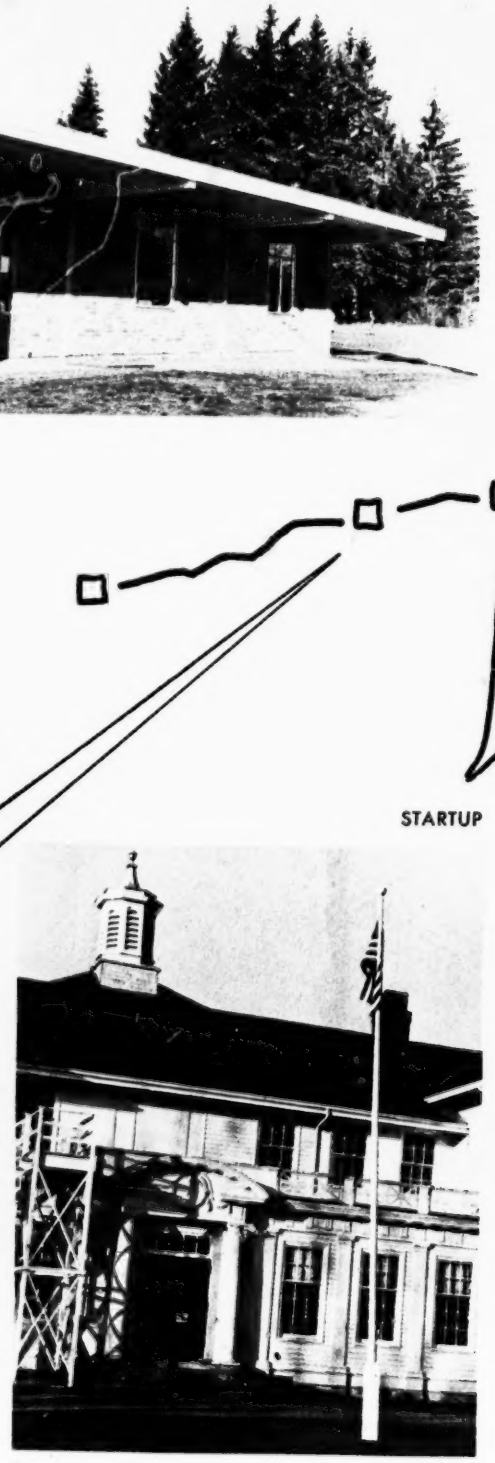
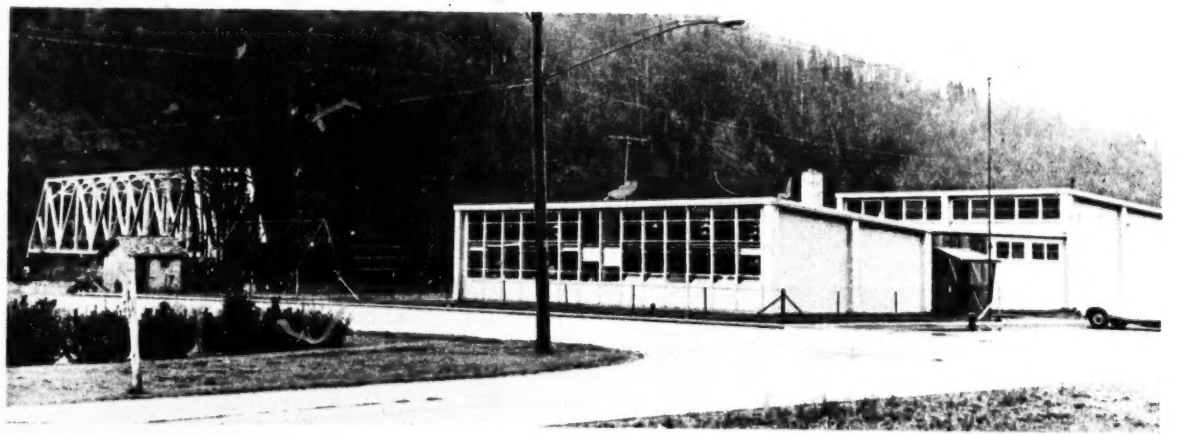
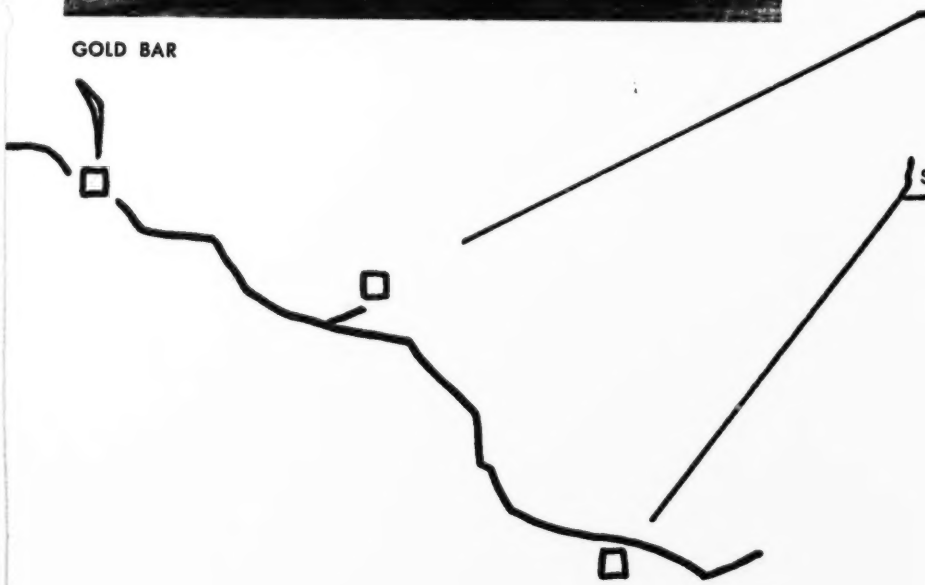


STARTUP







The school districts served by this cooperative lie on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains with the area between districts covered by mountainous foothills and river valleys. These topographical distinctions have, in the past isolated the districts to some degree and provided some problem in inter-district communication.

In spite of these isolative factors certain common economic and social characteristics bind this area together. It is largely rural with agriculture and forest products industries being major land uses. Middle and lower middle classes predominate with probably an average number of economically and culturally deprived families included in the population.

Working With Teachers

Since the primary purpose of the guidance program is to facilitate the basic function of the school, that of instruction, it logically follows that the classroom teacher plays an important role in offering guidance services to pupils.

Teachers involved in the program have expressed a desire to know more about child development, learning theories, behavior problems, diagnostic techniques, group guidance activities, etc., as a means of keeping up with the ever-increasing range of knowledge about human behavior.

The result of in-service training is developing improved guidance by teachers. The program attempts to assist teachers in dealing with guidance problems at their level of demonstrated competency and strives continuously to raise the level of competency of the teacher.

In-service opportunities are provided for teachers through individual contacts with counselors and consultants, through workshops, and through extension classes offering college credit.

Teachers meet to gain information concerning classroom management and techniques

Working With Parents

Parents represent a major proportion of the influences operating in the life of the individual child. They are a source of information about the student, and they are a resource in planning the environmental modifications designed to help him learn new ways of reacting.

Purposes of contacts with parents are: (1) to gain information that will aid the counselor in better understanding the child, (2) to impart information to parents so that they may better understand and help their children, (3) to interpret the guidance program and other school practices to the parents, and (4) to involve parents in the guidance function and other programs of the school.

Helping the parent to feel more adequate in his task of providing the proper learning environment for his children in the home has become an important objective of the counselor. Educated parents can facilitate the task of the school and insure the success of its educational program with the child.

Principal, parent and counselor discuss individual pupil progress

Counselor meets with parents to impart information and to interpret the guidance program and other school practices to parents

Planning and Evaluation

This project is the culmination of many months' efforts to bring the resources of an entire region to bear on the common problems of the various districts. Joint endeavor has typified all stages of the planning process and has involved those who are nationally known in the field of guidance, experts and consultants from Eastern Washington State College, the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, as well as knowledgeable local authorities. The decision to investigate this problem did not arise spontaneously, but represents the outcome of a sequential process of speculation, consideration, and evaluation.

Objectives of this program avail themselves of evaluation in several fashions. It is assumed that any ongoing and vital program must be flexible to the extent that it can encourage feedback and alter program objectives in light of these findings. This program is based on the assessment of need. Since the program began, however, the structure of need has been altered.

This requires periodic re-evaluation and the establishment of new priorities. Two objectives to evaluation are seen: (1) evaluating the efficacy of measures taken to meet needs and altering the program to fit more closely, and (2) evaluating the structure of need and reorienting the program to meet new forms of need.

Direct service to children lends itself to clinical measurement. This includes empirical measures of achievement, improved performance related to academic achievement, and observation of improved functioning in a host of areas.

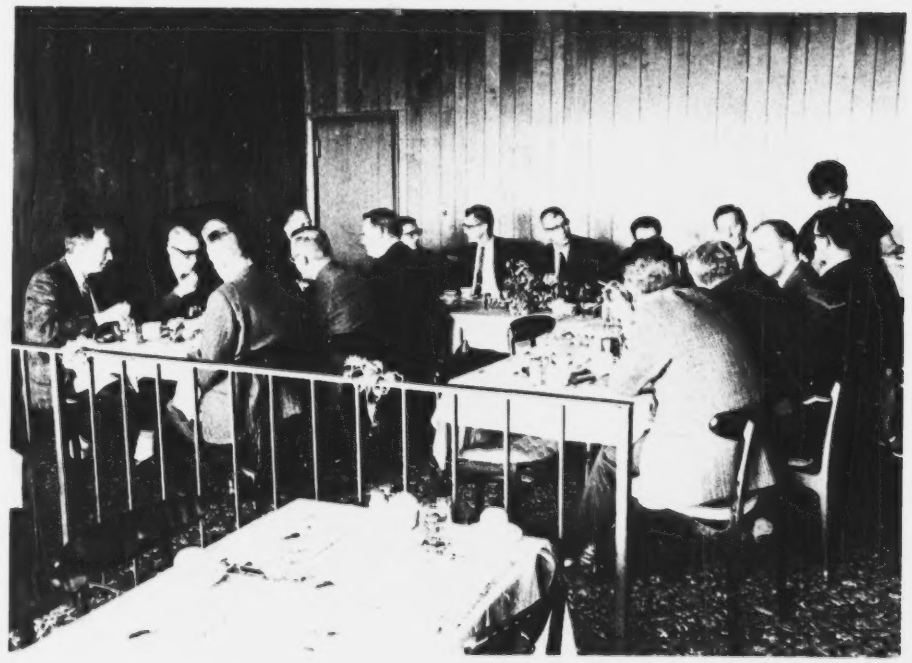
In-service training and individual work with teachers has been reflected as the acquisition of new skills on the parts of these professionals. Ultimately, however, it must be demonstrated as higher levels of function on the part of children in the districts.

Parental attitude has changed positively. Parents view their children and their relationship with the school in a different light as a result of exposure to the program.

In the project there is provision for original research. This permits the testing of hypotheses with respect to counseling technique, group guidance activities, diagnostic techniques, learning theories, etc.

Staff and consultants review and plan program activities.

District administrators meet for luncheon and discussion of program's progress.



Staffing

Periodic meetings of the program staff with the consultant provide for the opportunity to review program, plan for the future, and revise program as necessary. This consultant time is also used to: (1) determine short-term goals for the program with the administrators of the cooperative districts; (2) perform in-service consultation with the teaching staff concerning classroom management techniques and practical application of learning theory; (3) contact individual and small groups of teachers concerning specific management techniques, understanding individual differences and recognizing signs of emotional disturbance; (4) review and evaluate appropriate involvement of various referral agencies, and (5) consult with individual counselors and school psychologist concerning particular emotional, academic, and social problems and development of the role and function of the elementary counselors.

Staff and consultants meet for weekly planning and review of program's progress.

Pictured at left is Ernest R. Fox, Superintendent of Schools, Monroe School District No. 103. Mr. Fox is administrator of the serving district and has been instrumental in the success of the program.

Further information concerning this project
may be obtained by contacting:

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Photography: Jay Martin